

## **Plans for the Joan Lorenz Park Tot Lot**

For the past two years, the City has held over 50 public meetings to discuss and solicit community feedback on the design for the Main Library expansion and the redesign of Joan Lorenz Park. Those meetings included:

- public hearings before the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission (MCNCDC) and the Planning Board
- reviews by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

From the beginning, the city made a commitment to maintain a tot lot in the park. During the public process, the Citizen's Design Advisory Committee (DAC) endorsed two Tot Lot options that were appropriate to both the building's architectural context and the logical locations for pedestrian pathways. Project Director Alan Burne spent several days over the course of the summer of 2003 in the Tot Lot talking to users, posted notices for public meetings in the Tot Lot and the Children's Room, and posted his phone number and e-mail address for users to communicate their concerns and desires for the new Tot Lot.

The consensus of Tot Lot users was a desire for:

- shade trees to protect children from the sun
- an additional swing set
- a water bubbler
- the same amount of space and equipment

All wanted the Tot Lot to remain on the site but expressed no preference for where as long as their requirements were met. Both options proposed by the City meet all the expressed desires of Tot Lot users.

- Option A is located at the southwest corner of the site.
- Option B would be placed in front of the exiting tennis courts.

After this exhaustive design review and community participation, the preferred option, is Option A.

At their most recent public hearing on the Main Library Project, the MCNCDC commented that, maintaining the Tot Lot in its current location "is not appropriate and would virtually distract from the primacy of the historic and expanded library structures". One of the nice features of the current location of the Main Library is the availability of open space and play space for children. It makes this site a destination for families. The Tot Lot, however, is not managed by the Library and, as in the past, immediate proximity is not essential to the success of either the Tot Lot or the Library

As the design process progresses, there will be additional public meetings to ensure that the final layout of the Tot Lot has the equipment that is desired and that the design is consistent with the standards of high quality that exists in tot lots throughout the City.